

Testimony of Rhonda Boisvert

Owner of Pleasant View Manor

**H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET
FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRIETH 2019, AND
MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services Public Hearing, February 16, 2017
Concerning

Department of Social Services Budget-Residential Care Home Funding

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Senator Flexer, Senator Markley, Rep. Dillon and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, my name is Rhonda Boisvert. I am the owner of Pleasant View Manor Residential Care Home in Watertown and a past President of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes.

This is my 5th consecutive year testifying on behalf of Connecticut's approximately 100 residential care homes. Our issues remain the same. Since 2010, our rates have been frozen; meaning new costs associated with RCH's have often not been reimbursed.

RCH's serve about 3,000 residents of which 94% are state funded beds. This limits our ability to cost shift. My home in Watertown, CT serves 18 residents with psychiatric disabilities. We provide a clean facility, with a home like atmosphere, providing recreation outings and activities, home cooked meals, medication monitoring, and wellness appointments. My home in Haddam, CT serves 15 residents and we provide the same services at this facility.

We face personal challenges, such as cost and financing of improvements to the facility, employee wage increases have been stagnant for many years and benefits cut. We have to try to make cost saving changes when possible and had to take steps such as recreation hours are changed from 28 hours to 20 and limiting one employee to each shift.

In fact the cost challenges have become so bad that myself and many other home owners have had to use our own credit cards to run our home and ensure that we can pay our employees. This is no way to run a home or a business. And I assure you that my story is not unique. Many home owners, who are often longtime RCH owners, have had to take on debt.

Without residential care homes, the majority of our residents would be served in a more costly environment, such as nursing homes, hospitals, institutional settings or would be homeless. The CARCH Industry understands that difficult decisions need to be made in this budget. We urge the committee to acknowledge the impact of the budget on residential care homes, their employees, and some of Connecticut's most vulnerable residents.

I personally speak with residential care home owners on a weekly basis and I know what their needs are. We are all feeling frustration, and home owners and administrators continue to meet with their representatives to make them aware of the financial difficulties facing their home and our industry. We cannot continue to progress without the full support of the state. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rhonda Boisvert

Owner, Pleasant View Manor

(860) 945-3700